

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-061

OUTCOME: 0 - Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Smith

Question:

- a) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- b) Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the Department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- c) Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- d) Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved - if yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

- a) Yes. Compared to a spend of \$5,726,288 for the 2010-11 financial year, total spend on air travel has reduced in the Department of Health and Ageing by 27 per cent to a total of \$4,179,192 for 2012-13.

The Department incorporates these savings into the forward estimates but does not specifically budget in the forward estimates by business flights.

- b) The Department manages the use of consultants and contractors through the internal business planning process and monitoring year to date and forecast expenditure by the Chief Financial Officer.

The Department is managing the cost of this class of expenditure across the forward estimates consistent with its budget and the ongoing delivery of government programs and services.

The level of external consultants and contractors is consistent with the Department's budget constraints, government deliverables and need for the expertise this class of resource brings to a number of reform programs, including IT based initiatives. The Department's forward estimates take account of these factors. Moreover the need for external consultants and contractors is reviewed annually through the Department's Business Planning process.

- c) From 1 July 2012, the Department has complied with the Department of Finance and Deregulation's Non-Campaign Recruitment Advertising Policy (the policy) which mandates the use of online recruitment advertising and restricts the use of advertising in major daily newspapers.

In line with the policy, vacancies will be advertised online, except for positions which are hard to fill. The amount spent on Recruitment Advertising in the core Department in 2012-13 was \$79,968 which is down 82 per cent from a 2010-11 spend of \$450,751.

The Department incorporates savings into the forward estimates but does not specifically budget in the forward estimates by this class of expenditure.

- d) Yes. Compared to a spend of \$1,748,944 for the 2010-11 financial year, total spend on printing in the Department has reduced by 37 per cent to a total of \$1,100,996 for 2012-13.

The five per cent savings target has been achieved. Printing and publishing cost reductions are being achieved through the closer monitoring of hard copy printing and stationery, better use of online communication and reduction in White Pages listings.

The Department incorporates savings into the forward estimates but does not specifically budget in the forward estimates by this class of expenditure.